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With kind regards,
Henry Adams Bellows

February, 1922.

HIGHLAND LIGHT

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

HIGHLAND LIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HENRY ADAMS BELLOWS

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1921

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, February, 1921

TO
MY MOTHER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

MANY of the poems in this collection have appeared in magazines, and acknowledgment of permission to republish them here is due to the proprietors of *The Bellman*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Poetry Review of America*, *The American-Scandinavian Review*, *Puck* and *The Harvard Monthly*.

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HIGHLAND LIGHT

Quiet and dark and pure,— the breeze,
Awestruck, no more the silence braves;
Only the beat of tiny waves
Echoes spent tumult of the seas.

For this has sleep its blessing kept,
Sleep and the sea, to guard these men
Who fought with hurricanes, and then
Silently laid them down, and slept.

What faith is yours, that you can sleep
Knowing your peril's utmost reach,
Who never framed a prayer in speech
To pierce the stillness of the deep?

Trusting this hand upon the wheel,
Sure that some other hand tonight
Would wake the eye of yonder light,
Knowing the hand that laid this keel

And nailed the timbers fast, wrought true,—
Your whole lives lie in hands unknown,
And yet you sleep. The gales have blown
In vain against such men as you.

I claim your faith as mine. Untaught,
You never learned that others' art
Could speak for you, nor felt the heart
Leap answering to immortal thought;

Toiling in darkness, you would win
Living from life, yet found your way
To faith. I, seeking more, can say
The best I found is, we are kin.

So is it you stand close to me
As never those who prayed and then
Set themselves o'er their fellow men;
I wonder if they know the sea,

That makes their God seem dim and small,
Their God of bribes, and chosen days
For service, and their forms of praise.
I wonder if they pray at all

Beneath their jargon. Yes, they feel,
Not what they say, or what they claim
That they believe, but all the same
They have life's blessing when they kneel.

Our way is simpler, but our eyes
Are no less steadfast. So you sleep
Tonight, and hands from out the deep
Hold you, and from the earth and skies.

We trust each other, and the best
Life shows is only this. You wrought,
Unknowing, to give faith, and taught
That truth in which mankind is blessed.

Why should I, waking while you sleep,
Watch, hand on wheel, but that I know
Your faith has made a debt I owe?
And, should I fail you, could I reap

Harvest of faith in other souls?
How could I know that yonder light
Will gleam till morning puts to flight
The shadows, and the darkness rolls

Before the sunrise? No, we live
To earn the hopes men have of us;
We can win courage only thus,
And have but just the faith we give.

HIGHLAND LIGHT

Oh, what a peace rests on the sea
Tonight! The stars stand still awhile,
Saving for one, that seems to smile
Because it, too, is near to me.

I think the stars love one another,
Holding their ways because they know
How each goes bravely on, and so
Rests on his mate as on a brother.

They must love. Life is not alone
Of trifles, for a meteor light
Streams through impenetrable night,
And love makes earth and sky its own.

Then darkness never falls again
On us who, ere the lights depart,
Have seen laid bare a human heart,
Have known its beauty, and its pain.

So, as of old the vision came
To Moses on the sacred hill,
The ancient glory lights us still,
And we are never more the same.

We are the soul of all we see,
For each like coral reefs is built
Of others' hopes, and loves, and guilt,
A myriad's immortality.

What fabled heaven could be so wide!
This I that is all others roams
To find in countless hearts new homes,
And there, undying, shall abide.

Some spirit lifted out of strife,
Some child made happier by a word,
Some breast by beauty once more stirred,
Some weary soul made glad of life.

So we join hands, till sails are furled
In harbor, touching other souls
As wave against its fellow rolls
To send its heart-beat round the world.

What need is left for bribe or threat?
Why should the spirit beg for peace
In worlds to come? It cannot cease;
Life, seeming-blind, does not forget.

Each voice today is echoing clear
That ever spoke since life began;
What need of other worlds for man
Knowing he is immortal here?

There is no life that death can slay;
What if his sudden hand should smite
Out of the silence of the night;
My heaven was fashioned day by day.

I ask but this, to serve as well
As yonder light, not questioning how
But faithful to its duty now;
What more it never seeks to tell.

So, guide to harbor safely these
Your comrades, for your steady light
Stands as our symbol of the right,
Life's truth, across the swaying seas.

LEAVES

Dead leaves,
All that endures of a golden past,
Brown and withered and falling fast,
Tears the tree sheds when it grieves
Its summer's opulence could last
Only to vanish overnight.
Dead leaves — and yet
They treasure memories of life and light,
Of things we would not willingly forget,
And hold the promise of a waking day,
Earth richened by decay
To youth and joy once more,
To bear again
The glorious burden that it bore
Through centuries of pain
Out of dead leaves.

Unmarked they lie,
A sadness to the eye
That sees no more than they, yet this one leaf,
Hueless and shrunk and old, is still
A symbol of all joy and grief,
Of hope, and the indomitable will
That builds the living future on the wreck
Of present failure. In its texture sere
Lies memory; its brittle weakness holds
Promise of love, of summer come to deck
The quickened woods with radiance. It unfolds
Immortal language to the listening ear,
And yet so few will hear.

Millions of leaves,
Blown to the waiting earth
That gave us birth
And now its children to its breast receives;
After our little summer-time of life

LEAVES

Torn from the trees
By creeping autumn, or by gales of strife,
Or by a wanton breeze,
Some falling soon, some late;
The last ones wait,
Lonely and tremulous and very old,
The touch of winter's fingers cold.

Dead leaves, like these —
And yet endure the ancient trees
We nourished, and that nourished us in turn.
The earth grows younger with its age,
And still the everlasting fires burn,
And birth still mocks the rage
Of all the winds that howl above the graves
Of infinite centuries. And each,
So silent, so unnoticed, yet can teach
The utmost mystery of life,
The love that heals, the hope that saves,

The quiet after strife.
Each smallest one is all the world remembers,
And all for which it grieves,
And all the flame of life's undying embers,
And summer come again,
And joy, and pain —
Dead leaves.

AFTER SUNSET IN THE ROCKIES

Quietness everywhere;
The lake, that but an hour since was lashed
Into a make-believe of ocean rage,
Now lies beneath the eyes of heaven in calm
Inscrutable peace, its twilight extasy
Too pure for motion.

All around, the peaks,
That in full day spoke terribly of strength
And storm and struggle and of victory,
With nightfall put their battered armor off;
Benignly they draw near, and kindliness
Is in their silence.

Darker it grows,
And stars pierce through the infinite depths of sky;

The colors fade and vanish, till the world —
The silent lake, the cliffs and jagged peaks,
The star-strewn vault above — all join together
In blended darkness.

These selfsame crags
But now were resonant with Valkyr shouts;
The flames of battle played round each red peak,
And through the air the cavalry of storm
Drove their battalions, while the trumpet wind
Sounded the charge.

Peace after turmoil,
A peace as all-pervading as the dark,
That purifies the heart of willfulness
And all the insignificance of care,
Comes with the silence down the mountain-slopes,
The gift of night.

Nor time nor space
Can draw their shadowy veils around the lake

Calmed out of madness, and the rugged scars
Healed by the loving fingers of the night,
While in the sky the stars came quietly,
And with them peace.

THE SONG OF THE SHIP

A LONG farewell to your level land,
Your fields ploughed deep with gold,
Your towns where the great gray buildings stand
To turn the sunshine cold;
Enough of your smoke and your rattling mills,
You prosperous, thrifty folk,
With your tedious joys and pallid ills,
For it's time to cast the yoke.

The surf runs strong off Highland Light,
And the tide floods over the Rip;
The Nausetts are blinking across the night,
And I hear the song of the ship.

Hark to the spray on the weather bows
Where the southeast combers break

THE SONG OF THE SHIP

From the rhythmic furrow the schooner plows,
And the gurgle of the wake;
Hear how the timbers their voices raise
To the roar of running seas,
The vibrant wail of the windward stays,
And the steady boom of the breeze.

The surf runs strong off Highland Light,
And the tide floods over the Rip;
The Nausetts are blinking across the night,
And I hear the song of the ship.

Southeast by east our course we steer,
Straight down for the Georges Bank,
With only the northern gale to fear,
And only ourselves to thank;
A world away from the noise and fight
Where never a man is free,
With the sun by day and the stars by night,
And the sky and the wind and the sea.

HIGHLAND LIGHT

The surf runs strong off Highland Light,

And the tide floods over the Rip;

The Nausetts are blinking across the night,

And I hear the song of the ship.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

The Lord set me down in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones; and he said unto me: Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

Ezekiel, 37.

* * * * * *

We were the dwellers in the valley,
Moving only as the earth moves rocks and stones,
Dry, void of hope, without life,
Yet doing all that is the business of bones.
We were husband and wife,
Son, father and mother,
Kinsmen or neighbors one to another;
We were many things, only there were no lovers
Among us all, for the spirit of love,
The soul that hovers
Between the earth and heaven above,

Breathing eternity into a day,
Had fled away,
Shuddering, from the desolate valley.

But never believe we were idle; nay,
We were a very bee-hive of bones.
Life there is even where soul is none;
The oak-tree groans
When the gale smites it: the fires of earth
Hurl rocks vainly against the sky,
Mocking the mastery of the sun
And teaching the ancient hills to fly;
So among us there was birth,
And seemly, decorous death, and giving in marriage,
After the immemorial custom of bones for all time.

This one, with the lofty carriage
And sightless eyes, we chose as our king,
To rule us by old laws, without will,

Like the monarch of a nursery rhyme,
Impotent for good or ill.

That one, with the ring
Gripping the knuckle of his skeleton hand,
We called the preacher of God's word,
And bade him by the barren altar stand
To speak the message that he never heard.

Oh, we were busy bones; we bought
And sold, grew rich or poor, we taught,
Nay, sometimes fought
Without passion or knowing or caring why.
But mostly, heaving as earth bade us,
We labored dumbly to lay by
Treasure of roots and moss and stones,
Fruitless, since we were nought but bones,
And the grave already had us.

Weary and toiling bones were we,
Eyeless, never to see

The cloudless kiss of morning, the great sweep
Of waters marching shoreward from the deep,
The sunset's walls of a flaming world,
Or the lustrous banner of night unfurled;
Never to hear
The music of a human voice,
Or the song of a bird,
The quiver of a passionate word
Aching with love, or hate, or fear;
Never to make foreseeing choice
Of joy, or pain,
Or the extasy which only comes again
Enfolded in the suffering that atones; —
For these things are not in the world of bones.

And then he spoke,
The prophet, and the silence broke
In thunder; the rocks shouted; the waters gave
tongue

To the omen; the tired earth grew young
Beneath a rain of sunshine; all around
The resonant hills poured echoes to the sound;
The air in unimagined voices spoke;
And we dry bones awoke.

But not forthwith; nay, one by one,
Each in his fashion, heard
The summons of God's word.
Some sprang to living ere was done
That first incredible organ-roll of speech,
While others dimly woke; but unto each
In his own time a message came
From God, to speak his name,
And bid him live.

One chanced upon a poor man, and he saw
The pitiful eyes, and felt the need to give,
He who had never given in all his life

Till then; and he looked up in holy awe
To see God's mercy shining on the poor.

To one there came a clashing as of strife,
The tramp of horse-hoofs on a blood-red moor,
The cry of the weak
Under the oppressor's scourge, who seek
The help of the indomitable arm
Of passion for a cause; and straight
He rose to meet the clamorous alarm
Of battle, and the burning joy of hate,
And victory, and pride;
And smiling he went forth, and fought, and died.

One, just at daybreak, heard
The sun's first welcoming
Sung for the whole world by a little bird.
That note became his soul, and made
His echoing pulses sing.

He heard the symphonies the tempests played,
The surging orchestra of sea and sky,
The voices of the stars,
And the singing of men's hearts.
And that with him the wonder should not die
Even as the echo of a word departs,
All that he heard within the bars
Of music did he set,
That men might hear, and nevermore forget.

One looked out into the uttermost depths of the
west,
As the sun lay for a moment golden on the world's
rim;
And the level rays burned into his breast
The lyric glory of color, like a hymn
To the gods of an older world.
To him the mysteries of light were unfurled
And the magic of the dark;

And on his eyes was set the mark
And on his hand,
That he should paint God in his rocks and trees,
His sunshine, and his mountains, and his seas,
For men to understand.

And unto one there came a silentness
More moving than the utmost sound could be,
The silentness of thought made free
To wander all among the stars, and guess
Some fragment of the dateless mystery.
And he, who in the fashion
Of bones, had never loved, was filled with passion
For silence, and he taught
In silentness the majesty of thought.

Another looked upon a woman's face,
A woman he had known, nor cared to know,
Through all the barren years ere sight

Was his, and lo,
He saw that she was lovely, with the grace
Of new-found faith upon her, and the light
Of passion in her eyes; he heard her speak,
Whispering low "I love you," and his cheek
Knew the soft magic of her glorious hair.
And that her lustrous beauty should not fade,
But live forever fair
For men to marvel at in days to come,
He who was dumb
Found language, and he prayed
To God in praising her; his living prayer
Enshrines her beauty through unending years,
Triumphant over time, and tears,
And death, and it has grown
For every land and every age
Part of the lover's heritage,
For in the poet's love each man beholds his own.

So was the prophecy fulfilled
Of him who spoke the word of old
Over the bones that God had willed
Should lie no longer cold,
Moving without a soul at earth's behest,
And on the breast
Of earth recumbent, but should rise to sing,
Each in his tongue, God's glory, till the sea
And land should ring
With praise re-echoing to the skies
In swelling harmony
Made of unnumbered passionate tones,
Chanting the ancient hymn that never dies
Out of the sunlit valley of dry bones.

SUNRISE IN VINEYARD SOUND

(In memory of L. W. C.)

Alone we waited for the sun; the sail
Echoed the swelling pulses of the deep;
The twilight air woke softly from its sleep,
And one by one the little stars grew pale.

The sea lay still beneath the silent sky
As hueless as the headland, where the light,
Still faithful to its vigil of the night,
Watched over us with keen, recurrent eye.

And then,— as in some vast cathedral gray
Across hushed worship rings the organ's voice
Triumphant, till the very stones rejoice
In answering harmony,— burst forth the day.

HIGHLAND LIGHT

The shores leaped from the mist to meet the blue
Of radiant waves; the breeze bore up the cry
Of welcome from the waters, and the sky
Flung morning's spendthrift glory forth anew.

And now all this is changed. The dear-loved plain,
The waters that were like a home, the shore,
The green, dark hills, you cannot look on more,
Nor see the wonder of the dawn again.

Now, when the foam is flying, and the breeze
Whistles among the ropes, I shall not hear
The voice I knew, nor see you standing near,
Glad in the tumult of the tossing seas.

But you have left me, not to vain regret
And sorrow only, for the leaping spray
Brings me the miracle of that far day,
And close beside me stands your spirit yet.

And then I know your work is not yet done,
For ever in my heart will come the thrill
Of strength new-born, as I shall see you still,
Silently watching for the rising sun.

WEST AND EAST

A vast new land, half wakened to the wonder
Of mighty strength; great level plains that hold
Unmeasured wealth; and the prophetic thunder
Of triumphs yet untold.

A land of eager hearts and kindly faces,
Lit by the glory of a new-born day;
Where every eye seeks the far-distant places
Of an untravelled way.

Oh generous land! Oh mighty inspiration
That floods the morning of the world to be!
Thy people are the builders of a nation,
Lofty, benignant, free.

Yet, at a trivial word, a star's clear gleaming,
A bird's sweet song, a sunset fading fast,

There comes a longing for the homeland, dreaming
Upon its sacred past.

A land of dear, remembered faces, moving
Through happy days that had to have an end;
Each stream is a companion known and loving,
And every hill a friend.

A longing to behold the mountains, rearing
Their great, gaunt heads; and once again to be
Upon the barren, wind-swept headland, hearing
The surges of the sea.

DON JUAN TO THE STATUE

Good monster, cease your pallid gibbering,
Your solemn antics from the outworn school
Of acting men call life. Could such a thing
As you have grown awe one not all a fool?
I knew that you would find me in the end.
Nay, saw it clear before my day began,
Felt how your leaden hand would seek to bend
The thing you never were — an honest man.
Honest, forsooth? You shake your stony head;
The world's way ever. In that marble skull,
So white, so honorable, and so dull,
Is room for nought but echoes of the dead.
You are the world itself, its rigid face
Portentous in its smug dishonesty.
Ah, does that hit you? You, of ancient race,

Honored and rich in lands, and what men call
An "injured husband" — as if that should be
Your double crown of virtue,— after all
Taunted by Juan as a walking lie?
Come, now, but which lived truer, you or I?
"An honorable love, an unstained life!"
What do you know of either, you who brought
Your plaything home, a child, to be your wife
In the same fashion that a horse is bought?
Your honor lay in making her your own,
Your chattel; if she had a pulsing heart
You never knew it; all your care alone
Was this, that no man else should have a part
In any thought of hers. And so you fight,
Measuring honor by your rapier's play,
Whoever dares to bring some fleeting ray,
Some warming glow from God's most holy light,
Into that prison of hers your honor built.
Kill him, you torture her; yourself be slain,

And he is branded with the murderer's guilt,
But holds the love he won, and all your gain
Is that your petty world makes show to grieve
To hide the mocking laughter in its sleeve.
"Unending love!" God, what a lying knave!
I wonder, have you ever loved at all,
If passion for one moment lit that grave
Important face of yours. The thing you call
Love is but pride of owning, jealousy,
The miser's pawing of his money-bags.
Love! 'Tis vile blasphemy to name its free
Untrammeled spirit, and your bond that drags
Its weary chain a life-time, in a breath.
Love is no slave of laws; it mocks at death,
And laughs to scorn the petty policies
That shape such lives as yours; it comes and goes
As sudden and unfettered as the breeze.
A word will quicken it, a word will slay.
It is the purest light man's spirit knows,

A flame from heaven while lasts its burning day,
Then night and dark. Undying? Keep the rose
A twelvemonth fragrant! You and all your kind
Would make a life-time sentence of a night
Of wonder. Oh, you drive me mad, so blind,
So false, and so tenacious of your right
To rob God's creatures of their liberty.
Now mark me. I have never sought to buy
A slave, nor hold a woman less than free;
I never sickened truth with honied lie,
Prating of "honor," "love that cannot die";
But when love's self came to me, when my heart
And soul and body knew its extasy,
Then I said this: "I love you, for a day,
A month, a year, I know not. When we part,
Let us be honest both, and bravely say
That love is dead. I have but this to give,
And ask no more but love in fair return.
Peril I bring, but if you dare to live

Free, true and noble, if you ever yearn
To be the thing God meant you for, and not
The slave life makes you, brave it, knowing well
That you must stake love's heaven against man's
hell.
Seek further nothing; would you share my lot,
You cannot; I must go my chosen way
While you go yours; no man can truly mate
With woman when the lengthening shadows wait
To cloud the evening of love's fleeting day.
There is my heart, too honest for the cheat
Of mouthing ceremony, or to play
The farce life makes a tragedy of. We meet
To love, nor question after."
Come then, say
If this be honesty or no. But then,
Grant me one love, but what of all the rest?
"Faithless" I hear you mumble. Why were
men,
And women too, the worst up to the best,

Not made by God with blessed power to change,
To grow, to alter? Would it not be strange
If any man should cast his likes and hates
At birth into an iron mould, nor dream
What miracle upon the morrow waits?
Better by far to part before the gleam
Has faded miserably, nor outstay
Love's regency so much as by a day.
Oh, you good, lying people! There, I come;
Else will the cock's crow shriek your mouthing dumb,
And all your righteous work will be to do
Again. You conquer, after all; the weight
Of life bears down the soul that dares be true,
Braving the world and careless of its fate.
So shall you stand for centuries to see,
Marble and praised and false, albeit some,
More wise, shall mock at you what time they come
To gape; and close beside you I shall rest,

Unmarked, with flowers growing o'er my breast.
Yet, would you write an epitaph for me,
To tell the world I died beneath your ban,
Conceive it thus: " Here lies an honest man."
Nay, nay, I come. . . .

TARPAULIN COVE

The wind has fallen with the sun, and now
Only its faintest murmur moves the air;
The ripples whisper underneath the bow
Like sleepy children's voices hushed in prayer.

The dreaming sea breathes slowly in its sleep;
Only the stars are waking, and they lie
Immeasurably distant in the deep
Unfathomable darkness of the sky.

And so we creep to harbor, very still
Amid the sleeping silence of the world,
To where the schooners lie beneath the hill
That watches o'er them when their sails are furled.

Among them like a new-come ghost we glide,
Shatter the stillness with our anchor-chain,
And as its echo dies away, the tide
Of sleep floods shoreward from the sea again.

FAITH

Not self, that strange, inconsequential thing,
Half prophet and half fool, that blinks at truth,
Selling the burning freedom of its youth
For gifts age may not bring.

Not fame, for when the whirling noise is still,
The silence passes judgment, or forgets,
And time alone, inexorable, lets
The good be known from ill.

Not dogma, mouthing at divinity,
Setting an image in the holy place,
Shrouding with words the truth's unswerving face,
Lest men, awakened, see.

Not the mean bribe of something after death;
The spirit is too proud to sue for peace
In worlds incredible, and fain would cease
With life's last yearning breath.

Not even love, so intricate with fear,
Bruised by the uncouth hand of common life,
A year's eternity, with death, or strife,
Or dimness waiting near.

Yet there is faith, the faith of work well done
Because mankind is working; for the pain,
The joy, the things we lose, the things we gain,
Unnumbered, yet are one.

Faith that we climb together o'er the bars
Of hate, an army marshalled by a soul,
Blind visionaries, struggling toward a goal
Among the singing stars.

THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL THE SON OF GRIM

"Then came Arinbjorn by night from Erik the Bloody Axe, King of Northumberland, to the room where Egill lay, and said to him that the King and Queen Gunnhild had willed that Egill should be slain when morning came; and he counseled him, if yet he would save his head, that he should wake through the night and make a poem in praise of Erik, that perchance the King might still grant him his life."

Egils Saga Skallagrimssonar.

* * * * * *

I, Egill, rover of the North, am cast
Into your hands, and Erik's day at last
Has come. I know the waves I yet shall see
Tomorrow, ere I die, will beckon me
Homeward in vain. The storm that stripped my deck
Of men, and flung my ship, a broken wreck,
Upon your barren shore, has brought me here

To look upon this king the Southrons fear.
Go, tell your lord, Erik the Bloody Axe,
That Egill fain would sleep; the writhing backs
Of waves have borne me over long, and death,
That follows with the sun, yet grants this breath
Of quiet in the darkness. Say I rest
Contented, nought of tumult in my breast.
The sea I fought, and men, but will not fight
Against the gods, that wait for me tonight.
The day is his; darkness belongs to me.
Tell him that, dead or living, I am free;
His prison is my chosen resting-place.
Go, tell him that, and tell him that the face
Of Egill, doomed to die, has shown no fear.—
It was to see me weep he sent you here.
What should I know of sorrow? Deeds like these
Of mine shall ring across the northern seas
When Erik and his axe have been forgot
In the grey mists of Niflheim. Each man's lot

Is written, and the Norns will never heed
Weeping or threats. In death there is no need
For prayer, or hope, or fear. Say to your king
That, ere I sleep, I once again shall sing,
And fashion the last song that I shall make.
Tell him, when in a nightmare he shall wake,
Let him give ear, and there will come to him
The battle-song of Egill son of Grim.

Alone.— They say that round the dying stand
All who were known in life, by sea or land;
So did the sorrowing gods in pity throng
About Bald's bale-fire. Aye, there Bard the Strong
Watches me from the doorway,— him I slew
At that brave feast in Norway, when I knew
The mead-cup reeked with death. The chattering thralls
Bid to that mockery in Atley's halls

Fled shrieking when I clove their master's head
Down to the leering lips. And you, long dead,
Come once again to look upon me! Now
The fates have scored their rune upon my brow,
But you, who sought to slay me long ago,
Died by my hand, and I am glad.—
I know
Yon face beside you.— Thorolf, brother mine,
Borne down by spears when, in the Saxon line,
We two made firm his crown for Athelstan
That mighty day at Vinheath. Never man
Had truer friend than you. I come at last
To feast with you in Valhall, but the past
Has cleared the debt I owed you. I have slain
The men who slew you, brother; none remain
On Middle-Earth to boast your death unpaid
By death. We two, together, unafraid,
Shall seek tomorrow Odin's golden door,
And speak as comrades with the mighty Thor.

More faces in the shadows,— men who sailed
With me from Kurland, when the darkness paled
To morning, and the flame glowed far astern,
The flame we kindled for a torch to burn
The hearts of them we hated.— Other men,
Comrades and foes in Iceland, from the glen,
The mountain and the plain they come, for I
Can never come to them. 'Tis good to die
Since death brings me so close to all mankind,
The living and the dead. I leave behind
No grief that vengeance will not burn away.
For, through the darkness, I can see a day
Not long to wait, that threatens with the gleam
Of ruddy sails; the flash of oars shall seem
The lightning of Thor's anger. In the shout
Of battle, and the tumult, and the rout,
Shall Erik once more hark to Egill's voice.
Few then shall be the Southrons who rejoice
That I am dead.

At morn the gulls will fly
Northward to Iceland, and their shrilling cry
Shall wake the distant sleepers with the word
"Egill is slain!" even as the gods once heard
The Gjallarhorn. Oh birds, that were my friends,
Take up the song that forth your comrade sends;
It is the heart of Egill ye shall bear
Back to his home. This is the only prayer
I make to Odin, that in Iceland long
The cliffs shall echo Egill's dying song.

Men of Iceland, mates of mine
On field and furrowed sea,
Bold in battle, seamen brave,
Hewers of helms with me,
Mindful of mighty blows full many
We dealt in days gone by,
Grind and gird ye the swords again;
Doomed is Egill to die.

Fearless forth to his fate he goes,
Fearless he lived and free;
Need of a master never he knew,
At the call of a king to be.
Ever the song of the sea he sang,
Ever the song of the sword;
Hollow the hearts that heard his voice
In the land of the southern lord.

Hearken, Erik, give heed and hear,
For a dead man's words are wise;
Across the seas my song I send,
Forth on the wind it flies;
Egill's body you bear to the bale,
But him you cannot kill;
In a thousand hearts his home shall he have
And his sword shall stay not still.

Glad the greeting I gave the sea,
Glad did I greet the sun;

HIGHLAND LIGHT

Wind and wave knew well my voice,
And the beaches where breakers run;
The biting blast was brother of mine,
My kin were the clouds on high;—
Are you fain to fight such mighty folk
That you dare to let me die?

Long have I lived, and light of heart,
Wealth have I won and fame;
High on my hearth burned the fire of home
When back from the battle I came.
Gladly I go to the land of the gods
Beyond the rainbow's rim,
For the rocks and ridges of Iceland ring
With the song of the son of Grim.

Now let the sun climb up the sky; I wait
The day that bears the shadow of my fate
Untroubled. I have fought, and bled, and won,
And seen the happy end of work begun

In doubt and danger;— aye, and I have made
A song that shall bear children. Unafraid
I listen for the summons of the horn
Of Heindall.— Yonder, cloudless, breaks the morn.

ON OFFENBACH'S "TALES OF HOFFMANN"

Fantastic child of moonlight, sing once more
Love's unrealities to hoodwink time,
Making of life a lotos-eaters' shore,
And death a children's toy of pantomime.

Gladly we hear thy voice amid the laws
And facts that bind us to remember pain,
Echoing a world where nothing seeks its cause,
Where no one grieves, and thought itself is vain.

Singing along the years, thou shalt possess,
For all thy delicate substance, strength to free
Men's hearts to moments of forgetfulness,
Swaying content upon thy magic sea.

STORM AT SEA

Night, hot and breathless; sails that flap, and spars
Creaking like souls in an uneasy sleep;
The weary writhings of the windless deep;
Above, the dying fires of the stars,
Which one by one go out behind the pall
That creeps above the dark horizon wall.

A sudden gust, the snap of ropes pulled tight,
The ship's quick heeling to the northern blast,
A calm,— then other gusts that follow fast,
And we go driving headlong through the night,
Blackness above, black water at the rail,
Blackness ahead, and on our heels the gale.

No light except the binnacle's white stare,
No human sound above the steady crash

Of breaking seas, that wind-flung come to lash
The steersman's face; and howling everywhere,
Through quivering shrouds, around the topmasts
stark,
The hurtling wind re-echoes through the dark.

The long-enduring hours go their way
In a monotony of ceaseless motion,
Till a wan grayness shows the whirling ocean
Beneath the clouded coming of the day.
Then, in each others' faces gaunt and white
Silent we read the fury of the night.

LEUCONOE

(After the Latin of Horace)

Seek not to know, for it is wrong, what fates the gods decree,
Nor try in vain, Leuconoe, the fortune-teller's art;
Far better is it to endure whatever is to be,
Whether for many winters still we linger, or depart
With that which now against the cliffs drives on the Tyrrhene sea.
Be wise; let distant hopes not cheat the present from your heart.
While we are speaking Time flies past, and follow him we must;
Enjoy today; tomorrow is a thing we may not trust.

BURIAL

Why should my death endure for countless years?
I would not have this frame, when I am dead,
Become a thing to think upon with dread,
But cease together with its hopes and fears.

Nor would I leave this life, so sweet and brief,
And all my friends, to lie long ages through,
Decaying mockery of the man they knew,
Within a city consecrate to grief.

No; let the kindly flames make all men free
To think of me as once I was; and lest
My ashes speak unbidden, let them rest
In the enfolding silence of the sea.

BEGGARS IN AMERICA

(1913)

"Do you speak German?" I, half scared, half
vain,
Debated for a moment, then, "*Ja wohl;*
Was kann ich fur Sie thun?" And so he spoke.
His voice was something like one I had heard
Long years ago — a very learned man,
Discoursing about Plato. What he said
Was rather time-worn. Immigrant — two
months —
Loved gardens — tended flowers — something
vague
Mumbled about the *veilchen* — now no work —
No money — no one understood his talk,—
"I used to have a home near Freiberg; now
I am a beggar in America."

Lies, doubtless; yet about his face there clung
A sort of dignity; his measured voice,
As if reciting some dull author's poems,
Rang neither true nor false, but tired out,
Wearied with lying or with life — who knows?
His pale blue eyes were tired, too — a look
That I have seen cloud up an actor's face
When, having played a part five hundred times,
And played it well, and made his smiling bow,
He goes back to his dingy dressing-room.—
"I used to have a home near Freiberg; now
I am a beggar in America."

Well, be it so; he was an actor too,
Long overburdened with the part he played.
Perhaps he told the truth; what matters that?
Part truth, part lies, I fancy. That I gave
More than he asked did not disturb him much.
With that same weary dignity of his
He thanked me, saying little, and was gone.

Whither? I asked a righteous woman, firm
In organizing love, and she declared,
Outraged, he wanted drink. Well, then, he did.
Perhaps, half blinded, clinging to a bar,
He saw the home near Freiberg, and forgot
He was a beggar in America.

We are all beggars, brother,— far too like
To feel mistrust. Some beg, as you, perhaps,
For just a moment of forgetfulness;
Some beg for memories we cannot hold;
Some beg for love, for understanding hearts
With thoughts unbounded by the spoken word;
Others for fame, that men we do not know
May look, and speak our names; some beg for peace
And respite from the toil of going on;—
God, what do men not beg for! And like you
We find so few who understand the tongue
That can alone express the thing we are.

Waiting for sympathy that does not come —
The help that seems so easy to be given,
So hard to ask,— do we not all look back
To some far day within a peaceful house,
Our own in the dim spirit's fatherland,
A house we lightly left, nor ever thought
We should be beggars in America?

Go, eat or drink, good friend. I too have asked,
And had men wonder what my jargon meant:
I too have asked, and seen men turn away.
Yes, and at times I too have heard, "*Ja wohl,*
Was kann ich fur Sie thun?" and looked in eyes
That answered mine. Whatever strength I have
Is mine through charity of theirs. Thank them
That you are drunk tonight, or, it may be,
That you sit writing letters to your home.
Should I be drunk or sober,— who can say?
Half honest, both of us, and weary both,

Wholly improvident, we two can see
The little house near Freiberg still, thank God,
Though we are beggars in America.

TO THE MIDDLE AGES

Promise before the dawn; not glory yet
Of wakened morning, but the misty light
That veils the waters ere the moon is set,
When phantom ships go sailing into night.

Heroic twilight of undying names,
Of glowing deeds wrought by gigantic men,
Of Sigurd glorying amid the flames,
Of Roland slain in the Iberian glen,

Long since the skies were flooded with the day,
Yet shall men ever hear with quickening breath
How Erik's son sailed on the Western Way,
And Taillefer rode singing to his death.

THE SHADOW

Slow pulsing of the heart that whispers death,
And forehead cold with mists of endless night,
The moving lips that shudder at the breath,
And eyes that stare for light.

Yet nought have you to fear the dark can hide,
But she who silent waits, nor dares to stir
Lest Death creep past her, tearless at your side,
God, God! O pity her.

NIL DESPERANDUM

They say that Teucer, even when he fled
His father and his Salaminian home,
Yet bound a poplar crown about his brows,
And spake these words to his unhappy friends:
"Wherever fate, more generous to us
Than to our sires, shall lead us, we will go,
O friends and comrades. Nought is void of hope
When Teucer is your chief and guardian.
For truly did Apollo promise us
Another Salamis for days to come
In a new land. Oh ye, strong men and true,
Who long with me have suffered evil things,
Now drive away your cares with easeful wine.
Tomorrow onward o'er the mighty sea."

THE SHORE

There is a desolate waste beside the sea,
Long reaches of gray sand, whereon the waves
Beat their monotonous and endless march;
And all the shore in utter dreariness
Yearns for the gleam of sails furled long ago.
Only the restless seagulls know the place,
And screaming mock its deathly loneliness.
But there are voices from the swaying sea,
And there are voices in the living air;
And now the gulls are silent, and the sea
Murmurs its world-old sorrow.

Then a voice:—

From the ashes of the past,
From the gladness and the pain,
From the first and from the last,
I remain.

Though the stars forever strive,
Yet their strife is still the same;
I am all that shall survive:
I am Fame.

Wandering like a dream across the waste
It wailed upon the wind; and far and near
There came a dreary echo —"I am Fame."
And ever and anon, as back and forth
Amid the desolation swept the voice,
Through the still air it quivered —"I am Fame."
And a lone gull cried out in answer to it.

And now a mist, as gray as the gray sand,
Lay heavy on the sea, and in the mist
That bound the world there was a voice so old
That life became eternal weariness:—

Lo, I am Power; in an iron hand
I hold the stars; my voice can call to life
The silent dead, and make the sun to stand.

The earth is mine, and all the depths unknown
Are mine; and in a ring of endless strife
Are reared the flaming bulwarks of my throne.

And then the voice died into nothingness.

And from the east there came a sounding wind
That drove the mist before it, and behind
There followed a great coldness. All the earth
Shivered; the air was visible with cold.
And then, as distant as the frozen moon,
Arising out of nowhere, everywhere,
From sea and sky and earth, came forth a voice:—

Life is an endless waste of vain desires,
Of empty labor and unfruitful years;

And all the myriad little hopes and fears
Are passing flames of everlasting fires.

I am the end of all things; and the breath
Of man is incense and a fleeting dream
That I have long forgotten in the gleam
Of never-ending life; for I am Death.

Then there was silence over all the world,
And vacant misery and unknown fear,
And through the clouds the cold gray hand of Death,—
When suddenly there came a western wind,
And the long level shafts of the warm sun
Lay on the waters like an aureole.
The desolate sands turned golden, and the air
Thrilled into living motion. Then from out
The mist of sunset came a singing voice:—

Into the emptiness of night,
Tossed by the winds in surging strife,

The voices take their flight;
Ever they wander to and fro,
Mocking the thing they cannot know,
The truth of love in life.

They are but echoes of the world,
Back from the hollows of the sky
In shadowy madness hurled;
Never to bend what they yearn to sway,
Nor dim the courage of the day,
The hope that shall not die.

Then there was silence up and down the shore,
Bathed in the sunset's glory; and the world
Faded to gold; and all the dreariness
Had vanished with the voices down the wind.

ON THE TRAIN — MARCH

God! What a country:
Flat, rusty, desolate fields,
Flecked with puddles of dingy snow,
Houses unpainted, haphazard in a wilderness of
man's making,
Breeders of creeping madness;
Towns — cities perhaps —
Made of factories, freight yards, hovels and
churches;
And all — fields, people, towns —
Utterly flat and dreary.

Wait. When next you come
Spring will have whispered the fields to life;
Foliage will have cast its mystery about the wan
houses,

God's trees will hide the churches;
And in people's eyes
Will shine a light, such as shone from Moses' face
of old;
And, like him, unaware
Of the myriads that turn to them for help,
They will look out over their wide fields,
And go thither to their labor.

THE VOYAGERS

We were weary of our prison, with its wheels that grind and roar,
Till we broke the bonds that held us there, and knew that we were free,
Till the walls were far behind us, and the morning star before,
And the life that knows no master, and the surging of the sea.

So we built a ship and manned her, and we left the seething town,
And we reached the Northern Ocean, where the ice-fields heave and groan,
And they fettered us and bound us, while the mocking sun looked down,
And we froze, and starved, and gloried, for the toil was all our own.

Then back we came and wearily we sought the trodden way,
And we left the ship at anchor, and we thought our work was done;
Till we looked across the waters, and we heard the leaping spray
Laugh to scorn our dull contentment in a peace we had not won.

So we manned our ship a second time, and sailed her round the world,
Twenty months of wave and tempest, till we reached the kindly shore;
Then we brought her back to harbor, once again her sails we furled,
And we swore by all the gods of earth to sail the sea no more.

But the winds still call us onward to the prize we cannot gain,

And rest is dreary to the soul as meadows to the eye;
Let us leave the land behind us, let us launch the ship again,
And we'll sail for worlds undreamed-of, sail forever till we die.

EVENING SONG

Over the water a gleam,
The breathless light of a star,
Guiding me over the waste of sea
Back to the harbor bar.

Over the water a breath,
The wind's faint, tremulous sigh,
Drifting across the silent waves,—
And none can hear but I.

Over the water a voice,
Tender and soft and true,
Borne on the shafts of the dying sun,
Calling me back to you.

MARSTON MOOR

He left us at the break of day,
  His laugh rang clear, his eyes were bright,
He kissed the rose he bore away,
  And singing rode into the fight.

At noon they said the day was won;
  At eve they said the day was lost;
And till that weary night was done
  We heard the trees moan, tempest-tossed.

At dawn they brought him home again,
  His brow was cold and wet with dew;
And by his side we watched in pain,
  And no one spoke, the whole day through.

ON AN ICELANDIC SKALD

(Egill Skallagrimsson)

Singer and conqueror of battles vast
With sea, and earth, and men in days of yore,
Father of mighty sons, who on the shore
Of barren Iceland reared a house to last
The generations of an age long past,
Now do thy kinsmen hear thy voice no more,
Nor ever shall they see thy flame-tipped oar
Lash the white spray to meet the bending mast.

Ten centuries weigh down upon thy grave;
Yet one still hears thy song, and sees thy face,
Stern, battle-scarred, unyielding; for the wave
That thunders on to work the east wind's will
Makes his heart sing with the old gladness still,
And tells him we are of the selfsame race.

UNDROWNED

The staysail's fast, thank God. My hands are cut;
I'd look at them if it were not so dark.
But then, what matter? And why work so hard
To lash a useless sail the wind tore loose?
There isn't any chance. An hour more,
And then the sands. God, but it's dark. Perhaps
If we could see it would be even worse.
I'll take the wheel again if we're afloat
At daybreak — but of course we'll all be dead
Long before that. John's got a steady hand,
He'll hold her,— and my arms were getting numb.
I'm glad he took her for awhile. Old John,
I'm sorry that he's got to drown. . . .

Oh, Lord,
It's cold. And how I used to hate the job
Of man-handling the furnace back at home!
I hate this feeling numb, and soaked as well,
All clammy, like an oyster. You can't drown
An oyster, though; and even if you could,
I don't suppose he'd mind. Well, do *you* mind?
Wake up, you jackass, you've an hour left,—
An hour, do you hear?— in which to live.
Think of your past, the way they do in books.
You've got your chance to act a leading part
In melodrama. . . .
Oh my Lord, it's cold.
What's happened to the starboard light? Gone out,
Smashed, maybe, for the water drives like shot.
Well, that's no matter either.— Poor old John,
I wonder, does he mind this getting drowned?
He used to write such funny, stupid poems

All about life and death. He didn't know.
Does he know now? . . .
We've just about an hour,
And then — John's chance is better than the rest,
He swims so like a whale. Poor Dicky, now,
He'll go down with a single bubbling grunt;
And as for me — oh, I'll be drowning too.
It's queer. Tomorrow morning, I suppose,
Things will go on, only I won't be there
To see them. Hope my body won't be found.
They'll have enough to stand at home without
That horror.— Here's the biggest wave of all!
She's knocked clean over. Can she make it?
There,
The bow swings up,— she's righting. Good old
John.
. . . Try to remember that you're going to die.
This is a rotten time to be so calm,
But you'd think better if you weren't so cold.

Don't miss the chance; you can't do this again.
How many vivid pictures of your past
You ought to see,— the house where you were
born,
The home you never held quite dear enough,
The men you liked or hated, and the girls
You never kissed.— Now there's old John, a poet,
Or pretty nearly one,— does he see things?
I'm damned if I do. I don't want to drown,
Of course, but life like this is beastly cold.—
My watch is in my suitcase; that's too bad,
It might have stayed at home. Then — so might
I.
I wonder. . . .
Here, what's that? Some crawling fool
Butting me in the stomach! Dick? Of course
I didn't hear you. No. Speak louder, man.
What's that? Oh, John's all in? Well, I'll be
there.

Wedge yourself in against the mast — like that;
I'd hate to have you drown ahead of time.
. . . Now to get aft. It wouldn't do to stand.
I'll fetch it somehow. There's the cabin hatch,
Leaking like hell, of course. The wheel-box next.
Good, there it is. Here, John, unlash yourself;
I've got the wheel. Climb off and go below.
No, you can't get there. Roll up in your coat
There, down to leeward of me. That will keep
Some of the water off you. Good old John,
You've done a bully trick.— He doesn't hear
A word I say. No matter. . . .
Thank the Lord
The binnacle stays lighted. North by east
Half east. I didn't think she'd do that well.—
Hard over! Now swing back. God! it feels good
To get my fingers on the spokes once more.
No use in it, of course, and yet we'll fight

The thing right to the end. You're doing well,
Old girl, and heaven knows you've stood enough
To smash you before this. Now what a joke
If we should stay alive! I'll bet that John
Has got his epitaph all studied out.—
Hard over once again!—I'll fool old John.

FEBRUARY

Look how fast the snow is sifting
Through the close-meshed sky,
Silence on its pinions drifting
As the colors die;
Shadows gray to darkness stealing
Gather round about;
All the world tonight is feeling
Old and tired out.

Never mind; the winter's chillness
Only waits for spring,
And behind the snowflakes' stillness
Hear the robins sing;
Voice of leaf and grass and flower
Wakened every one

Underneath the golden shower
Of the spendthrift sun.

There's a day in June before us,
Lustrous green and blue,
Winds like heartbeats pulsing o'er us
Quick with rapture new;
Can't you feel the sunshine glowing,
Smell the good green earth
Breathing extasy of growing
In the spring's rebirth?

On that day of days, together
You and I will go
Out into the gleaming weather,
Where, none else shall know;
Go where centuries of beauty
Crowd into a day,
Leave the world, and care, and duty
Endless miles away.

Then, with all the summer's gladness
Mirrored in your eyes,
From the woodland's June-time madness,
From each bird that flies,
From the sunshine, you'll discover,
From the skies above,
What it means to have a lover,
What it means to love.

So, we'll watch the tide of darkness
Creeping through the snow,
Blotting out the houses' starkness
In its silent flow.
We can wait awhile together —
Waiting's over soon —
Dreaming of the golden weather
Of a day in June.

TWENTY-ONE

Tell me not of lovelorn shades,
  Groping through the world in sadness,
Sickly youths and morbid maids,
  And a love that burns to madness.

Underneath the cheerful sun
  Tears are pitifully plenty,
Logical at sixty-one,
  Imbecile at one-and-twenty.

Give me all the sunlit air,
  And a girl who loves fine weather,
And we'll wander — who knows where —
  Gaily through the year together.

WEST WIND

Gliding athwart the misty years
Like the murmur of a breeze,
You breathe away the unshed tears
Of numbed expectancies.

We met so oft, yet never met,
Our thoughts dwelt far apart,
Till suddenly your face was set
Like a lamp within my heart.

I who was mute have found new voice,
Blinded, you bring me sight,
And wake my spirit to rejoice
At weariness grown light.

The summer breeze will sink and die
As softly as it came,
But the heart it touched in passing by
Will never be the same.

DRESSES

White

Rippling light of a summer's day
Where the west wind laughs as he dances by;
The white of your dress is the clouds at play,
The blue of your eyes is the glowing sky,
The gold of your hair is the sunbeam's ray,
And the wind that laughs, and the birds that fly,
And the water's gleam, and the morning dew,
And the violet's fragrance, are all in you.

Old Rose

A picture out of courtly France,
  Of music and of dance,
Where lovers' eyes caressing strayed
  O'er beauties half-displayed;

Fragonard is it, or Watteau,
Whose art you come to show,
Filling with living loveliness
Their miracle of dress?

Gray

Lucky furs, that keep the cold out,
Keep you warm and snug,
There's a tempting hope they hold out
Of a bear-like hug;
If this hope does not deceive me,
Shed your furs of grey;
I can keep you warm, believe me,
Quite as well as they.

Green

The budding message of the spring
Gleams in its folds,
The May-time's happy welcoming
Its texture holds;

Bosom and shoulders shining white
  Through veil of green,
As through the opening leaves the light
  Of dawn is seen.

Red

The red rose breathes of passion, and the flame
Is red as blood; both flame and rose are you;
To fashion you love's sudden lightning came
To meet the flower's fragrance, and its hue.
What sweetness have you left in all the rest
Of life, who took so much for only this,
To make me long to hold you to my breast,
And draw your soul out in a blinding kiss?

Black

Night frames the moon's pure loveliness; so here
The soft black clings about your radiance clear;
White arms and neck and lustrous hair, and eyes

Twin stars grown loving in the sombre skies;
You are the moonlight's magic, standing thus,
Darkness made luminous.

APRIL

Then from the waking fields the lark arose
Soaring, and sang once more; the glancing streams
Laughed in the lazy sunlight; and o'er all
There came the warm, sweet breathing of the spring.
And now, from out the wintry castle walls
Rode forth, with flash of gold on rein and spur,
The baron and his comrades to the hunt.
And through the glades there rang the silver sound
Of horns, and the deep baying of the dogs,
And joyous call of hunter to his mates;
While down on all there smiled the kindly sun.

JULIET

He used to wonder about Romeo and Juliet,
About them and others like them
Who, in a sudden glance,
So the poets maintained, beheld each other as the sole centers of all life.
Then he said, "It was their youth.
Long dreamers of love, passion made lovers of them.
By youth alone is this thing possible,
Nor was I so unlike them, once."

So he thought, and went about his business,
Feeling very old, and settled, and calm,
For what further had he to do with passion?
Then — he has never known why —

A woman gazed at him steadily from eyes that
seemed like music,
And he felt his eyelids tighten as he looked
through her eyes into her passionate heart.
Then he knew that the poets had seen the truth,—
And yet they were neither of them young.

THE TRIUMPH OF TAMBURLAINE

First there comes a captain:

Be glad, all ye that sorrow, and rejoice;
For come is Tamburlaine, the godlike one.
And he hath bound the seas beneath his sway,
And yoked the sun to draw his chariot.
His voice is thunder and the sounding gale,
And as the strength of morning is his might.
Make way, make way for Tamburlaine the Great.

Then follows a troop of captive kings, singing:

Sound of chains that gnaw our hands,
The hissing song the whiplash sings,
Fit music for a band of kings.

Barren and void the altar stands,
Our palaces are filled with dread,
Our homes are cities of the dead.

The gods lie broken through our lands,
They battled and were overthrown,
For Tamburlaine is god alone.

Then marches a band of soldiers, singing:

Oh, the East has bowed its head,
And the West has feared to die,
And the South with blood was red,
When Tamburlaine passed by.

Oh, the gods themselves have fled
From their homes above the sky,
For their hearts were sick with dread
When Tamburlaine passed by.

Then, on a golden car, comes Tamburlaine:

Silence this tumult that offends the skies.
Why do ye look on me and call me god?
I am no god. These jewels, what are they?
Ay, though they dim the gleaming star of night,

Of what avail is all their loveliness?
Or what will profit me yon haggard slaves,
That like mute oxen drag their weary limbs?
I care not for them, for beyond the sea,
Within the sunset's golden mist enwrapt,
There lies a land that knows not of my name;
Nor ever shall know, for the veil of death
Will sink about mine eyes ere that can be.
I cannot reach it, and all else is nought.
And I am very weary of my life,
Since life is all too short to reach the goal.
And still they look on me and call me god!

WITH A BOOK OF POEMS

I HAVE no words to praise you; should I speak,
My words would cast but shadows of the truth,
Faltering upward, leaden-footed, weak,
They that should rise on the strong wings of youth.

As through night's darkness one beholds the sun
Clear in the eye of memory, whose sight
Is stricken till the glowing day is done,
So am I blinded in your beauty's light.

And, since my love so dwarfs my utmost speech,
I, who long played with words, must silent stand;
Yet have you taught me to the skies to reach,
Plucking the stars down with unfaltering hand,

And making poets of old my service do,
Since, whatsoe'er they wrote, they dreamed of you.

FOUR SONGS

I

Light of the world,
Yet from her eyes shine forth the fairer rays,
A wonder of imagined days,
Silent and deep.

Light of my world,
Yet shall the dimmer rays outshine your eyes,
When all your luminous magic lies
In dreamless sleep.

II

I looked upon the wonder of thine eyes,
And saw fair Love enthroned there like a star;
Love quivered in thy voice as from afar
The singing of a lark in sunlit skies.

I saw the inmost temple of thy heart,
The shrine of Love, but Love I found not there;
He mocked me from thy lips and gleaming hair,
And so we two in bitterness must part.

III

The Two Loves

In eager hope I fled to love and thee:
I never knew that joy could die so fast;
A mocking future and a phantom past,
No more is left to me.

The breathless silence of the silent night,
The level reaches of the swaying sea
Are in thine eyes, and mirrored there for me
Is Love's own perfect light.

IV

She does not love me,
She whom I love so much, but like a star

Goes on her way, my only heaven, so far —
A world — above me.

The dewdrop all in vain
Longs for the bosom of the heedless cloud;
Such love have I, and, loving her, am proud —
And pride is near to pain.

A VILLANELLE OF THE GALLOWS

(Old French)

The Wind of Death through the darkness moans,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

The leafless tree it creaks and groans
Beneath its heavy burdens three,
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

Its burdens fleshless corpses be,
The hungry birds have picked their bones,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

He calls them down with mocking tones,
As on the whirlwind dance the three,
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

A VILLANELLE OF THE GALLOWS

The first a thief of low degree,
His puny soul the demon owns,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

Beside him rattle a murderer's bones,
And scorched in hell his soul shall be,
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

The third from battle once did flee,
Fearing the shafts and whizzing stones,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

His soul beneath the gibbet groans,
And dreads whate'er its fate may be,
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

But barred from hell that soul shall be,
Nor heaven shall rest the coward's bones,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

Forever 'neath the tree it groans,
Nor hell nor heaven it dares to see.
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans,
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

THE CARAVAN

On through the burning sand,
Under the burning sky,
With the sun like a glowing brand,
And the hot winds singing by,
Where for endless miles on either hand
The shimmering deserts lie.

Night stalks over the plain,
And the blinding whirlwinds roar;
A cry for rest from pain,
And the town that waits before;
At the journey's end to turn again
And face the sands once more.

THE QUESTION

Love, when you and I are dead,
Shall our souls be lovers yet,
And remember, or forget?

Love, when you and I are old,
Are there roses in the fall,
Or is springtime past recall?

Now, when you and I are young,
Dare we trust a distant year,
Shall we hope, or shall we fear?

LONELINESS

The throngs go by, nor tell me where they go;
They move as in a dream,
As shadows which I know yet cannot know.
In mute, phantasmal train
Their pantomime sweeps on and on again,
A show where nothing is, and all things seem.

What solitude of tempest-cradled isle
Could ever be so drear?
Men come and go, and all with joyless smile
In silentness pass by.
I wonder, will they turn when I shall die
To mark one lost among the shadows here.

THE LOVE POTION.

(After the German of Gottfried von Strassburg)
Circa 1200

Eastward from Ireland sailed Tristan forth,
And with him Iseult, but the queen spoke not,
Weeping and grieving sore, that from her land,
Where she knew people, and from all her friends
She now was gone, and with a stranger folk
Was faring to a land she did not know.
And Tristan ever strove to comfort her,
But Iseult held her peace, for still she thought
Upon her kinsman Morolt, slain of old
By Tristan's sword. But, for he sought full oft
To know the reason of her silence, sudden
She spoke to him, and told him of her thoughts.

"And could atonement for my kinsman's death
Be made, and were it made," she said, "no less

Should you be hated of me. I was free
Of care and sorrow till you came to us,
And you alone have brought this sadness down,
With craft and daring, on me. Oh, what fate
Sent you from Cornwall into Ireland
To work me harm? From those who cared for me
Since childhood have you taken me; and now
Lead me I know not where. How I was bought
To be the loveless bride of yon King Mark
I know not, nor what waits in store for me."

Then Tristan, heavy-hearted, left the queen
Amid her maidens, but ere long she sent
To speak with him again; and as the hours
Passed softly by, she kept him at her side;
And though her lips spoke only of her grief,
Another voice was speaking in her heart.

So they sailed ever onward, and the sea
And wind alike were fair; but soon the maids,

Iseult and her companions, never fain
Of wind and wave, were sore in need of rest.
Then Tristan bade them put to land awhile,
To find a harbor, and the company
Scattered along the shore; but Tristan went
To greet his lady fair, and at her side
He stood, and as they talked of this and that
He called for wine.

Now, saving for the queen,
Were none but little damsels in the ship;
And one said, "See, here in this flask is wine."
It was not wine that stood therein, though like
In hue and taste, but pain, and bitter grief,
And endless longing of the heart, whereof
They two at last should die.

But of all this
The little maid knew nought, so straight she went
To where the flask was hid, and brought it forth,

And gave to Tristan. Then he poured, and gave
The cup to Iseult. All unknowingly
She drank, and soon she gave the cup again,
And Tristan drank, and neither knew the draught
For aught but wine. And on the sudden came
The servant Brangaene, and she saw the flask,
And knew what ill was done. And all her strength
Was reft from her by fear, and she was pale
As death, and in her breast her heart lay dead.
Then straight she seized the evil-working flask,
And cast it forth into the midmost sea.

"Oh wretched me!" she said within herself,
"That ever I was born into this world!
Oh miserable! now how have I lost
Honor, and broken faith! Oh, would to God
That I had never come upon this journey,
That death had taken me before I sailed
This evil voyage with Iseult! Now alas,
Tristan and Iseult, for the drink is death."

Now, when the maiden and the man, Iseult
And Tristan, both had drunk, then suddenly
Came love, who layeth siege to every heart,
And never rests, and in their hearts he crept.
And ere they knew he raised his banners there,
And held them both his subjects. They were now
But one and undivided, who before
Were two, and foes. The hate that Iseult bore
To him was gone. The reconciler, love,
Had purified their hearts from all ill-will,
And joined them so that each unto the other
Was clear as is a mirror. But one heart
Had both; her sadness was his grief, his grief
Her sadness. Both were one in love and sorrow;
Yet both would keep it hid, in doubt and shame.
For howsoever blindly were their hearts
Bent to one will, the chance and the beginning
Were heavy to them; so they strove alike
To hide their longing.

Tristan, when he felt
This love, straightway bethought him of his faith
And honor to his lord; and fain would turn
And free himself. Thus vainly did he strive
Against his longing; would what he would not;
And like a captive struggled in his bonds.
So went the strife in him, for when he looked
In Iseult's eyes, and sweet love stirred his heart
And drew his soul, then ever did he feel
How honor held him back. But love at last,
For now he was love's vassal, won his heart,
And made him follow; and although in truth
His honor smote him sore, far sorer still
Love wounded him than faith and honor both.
Unwillingly he followed where love led,
But ever as he looked into his heart,
He found there only Iseult and his love.
And so it was with Iseult. When she knew
That love indeed had bound her, like a bird

Caught in a net she struggled to be free,
And so the net entangled her anew.
The more she sought to cast the net aside,
The more the bonds were tightened by the might
And blinding sweetness of the man, and love.
Shame drove her eyes away from him, and love
Drew her heart ever to him. So the maid
Still strove against the man she loved, and still
Did maiden shame grow weak before her love.

Then Iseult wearied of the hopeless strife,
And vanquished, as full many more have been,
She yielded up her body and her soul
To Tristan and to love.

Shyly she looked
Upon him, and her clear eyes spoke her heart,
Till heart and eyes had done their work. With love
And tenderness he looked on her, for he
In turn had yielded to his love, and her.

Lady and knight, so often as they could,
Were still with one another, and each day
They found each other fairer than before.
For this is love's true way, as it is now,
And has been, and shall be while love endures,
That still among all lovers each shall please
The other more as love within them grows,
Even as fruits and flowers are more lovely
In fulness than in birth. So fruitful love
Grows fairer from the first; such is love's seed,
That ever brings its harvest.

So beneath
A cloudless sky the ship sailed on, though love
Had turned two hearts therein from off their course.
And each knew what was in the other's heart,
And yet their talk was all of other things.

THE WITCH-CHILD

I WANDERED through the gloomy shade,
Where each to each the tree-tops sing;
And in a cave I found a maid,
A loathly, witch-born thing.

I hated her, yet spoke her fair;
She smiled, if such a thing could smile;
And then she cursed and left me there,—
Yet had she grown less vile.

I met her in a silent glen;
Less grim a thing she was to meet;
Again I softly spoke, and then
She smiled. Her smile was sweet.

THE WITCH-CHILD

I met her in the dreaming wood;
Her cruel eyes had grown full mild;
Once more I spoke; and lo, she stood
A lovely fairy child.

LESBIA

(After the Latin of Catullus)

My Lesbia, let us live, and let us love;
Be sure, the warnings of the wise are worth
No passing thought, for though the sun above
May set, he comes again to light the earth;
But when our passing sunlight wanes,
One night of endless sleep remains.

Give me a thousand kisses, then a score,
A hundred, then another score, and yet
Another hundred, then a thousand more,—
And then their number let us both forget,
That envy may not ever see
How many kisses there can be.

HARVARD SONG

We have journeyed to thee from the ends of the earth;
Thou hast brought the clear day out of night,
With the strength of our fathers, whose might was thy birth,
And whose faith is thy radiance bright.
We reap where they sowed; their toil is our gain;
We rejoice through their hopes and their fears;
We are strong in the sorrow of ages of pain,
And the might of invincible years.

Now the morning leaps up from the rim of the world,
And we stand face to face with the day;

The brave banner of dawn through the sky is unfurled; —
We must go, for it calls us away.
The treasures that years have laid in our care
We may hold but to give them again;
Shall we fail, in the glory that thrills through the air?
We are strong; let us rise and be men.

SLIPS OF THE PEN

BALLADE OF LENT

Now all our cheerful days are spent,
Alas, the calendars declare;
They gaily came and swiftly went,
Those days so bright, so debonair!
And now a season bleak and bare
Upon us for our sins is sent,
And we must live on meager fare
For forty days, for this is Lent.

Bright gowns of colors gaily blent
No more, alas, our loved ones wear;
For dainty sweets or roses' scent
No longer do they seem to care,
They do not decorate their hair,

Or not to any great extent;
  Oh, what a wearisome affair
Has life become, now this is Lent!

They go in search of discontent
  In place of joys they used to share,
And toil up virtue's steep ascent,
  Eschewing all they found most fair;
  For pleasure has become a snare,
And all are resolutely bent
  On demonstrating virtue where
It shows the most, for this is Lent.

Envoy

Dear Ladies, we are well aware
  You join with us in our lament;
So let us hopefully prepare
  For joys that follow after Lent.

THE COST OF LIVING

Economy's a dying art
For those who in the city dwell;
The cost of life there broke my heart,
And broke me other ways as well.

A country inn I hunted down,
A place I thought I could afford;
But when they heard I came from town,
The natives raised the price of board.

To tropic climes I made a dash,
But Yankee industry had come;
It took away my ready cash,
And left me hollow as a drum.

I made the frozen North my goal,
In hopes to find things cheaper there;

But the discovery of the pole
Had hit the price of polar bear.

And now I have a single thought,
To seek out some uncharted isle,
Till fishes charge for being caught,
And birds have learned to make their pile.

QUAM MINIME CREDULUS POSTERO

I'm quite in love with you today,
(When the sun shines, then make hay)
I'd do most anything you say,
(Gather your roses while you may).

I'll buy you tickets for the play,
(When the sun shines, then make hay)
I'll drive you in my one-hoss-shay,
(Gather your roses while you may).

And when I call I'll stay and stay,
(When the sun shines, then make hay)
And swear it hurts to go away,
(Gather your roses while you may).

I'll kneel, and rant, and whine, and pray,
(When the sun shines, then make hay)
And act just like a perfect jay,
(Gather your roses while you may).

Only remember that I may —
(For when the sun shines, *I* make hay)
Not be in love another day,
(So gather roses while you may).

A SPRING SONG

The hounds of spring are on winter's track,—
This phrase may not seem wholly new,—
And I am prostrate on my back,
Thinking of all I ought to do.

The earth in green is now arrayed,
The buds are bursting on the trees;
And I am certain I was made
Expressly for a life of ease.

Now lovers, strolling hand in hand,
Gaze at the friendly moon on high;
And I should like to understand
Why every one can loaf but I.

A SPRING SONG

Oh, Lord, your spring is bright and gay,
And sweet and soft and warm and fair;
But get it over quick, I pray,
Or else make me a millionaire.

PROSPICE

Some day when I have lots of time, and nothing
else to do,
I think that I will fall in love,— and fall in love
with you.
Just now I don't believe I could, my work dis-
tracts me so,
And then one can't afford it when one's bank-
account is low.
But when my work is mostly done, and pay-day
comes around,
The words "I am engaged" will have a most
enticing sound.
And then — well, one thing anyway is certain to
be true,
And that is, *if* I fall in love, I'll fall in love with
you.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

S0-BWA-097